

BASIC BEACH MOUSE FACTS

TAXONOMY

Subspecies of the Oldfield mouse (*Peromyscus polionotus*)

- 16 subspecies recognized
- 8 of these are considered beach mice
- Five are Alabama and Florida Gulf coast subspecies:
(Alabama, Perdido Key, Santa Rosa, Choctawhatchee, St. Andrews)
- Three are Atlantic coast of Florida subspecies:
(Anastasia Island, Pallid (presumed extinct), Southeastern)

CONSERVATION STATUS

- All beach mice have federal and state protection except for the Santa Rosa beach mouse.
- Primary reason - habitat loss from coastal development and hurricanes

NATURAL HISTORY AND ECOLOGY

- Habitat - beach dunes and open scrub
- Population density, reproduction, survival, body mass, greatest in winter; lowest in summer
- Weight - Males and non-reproductive females average 12.5 grams (about three nickels)
- Life Expectancy - < 9 months in the wild
- Monogamous - pair bond for life (< 3% of all species of mammals are monogamous)
 - < Breeding - year round if food is available
 - < 23 day gestation period
 - < 4 pups per litter
 - < can breed within 24 hours of giving birth (postpartum estrus)
- Food Habits - primarily feeds on seeds of beach plants and insects
- Nocturnal (comes out only at night)
 - < spends day in burrow

MOVEMENTS

- Homorange size - rough average 5000 meters² (about 1.25 acres)
- Subadult dispersal distance averages 168 meters (about 551 feet) from natal area (birth site)
- However, beach mice can disperse several kilometers

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

- Protecting and restoring adequate coastal dune habitat
- Installing and using dune walkovers
- Controlling non-native predators such as free ranging cats
- Using secured, covered garbage cans
- Controlling house mice and other pest rodents
- Traditional rodent control techniques (Poisons, snap traps, glue boards, and similar techniques) should not be used in beach mouse habitat

